

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 43

March 25, 1998, 6:30 pm
Page S-2561 Temp. Record

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL/U.S. Support of U.N. Peacekeeping

SUBJECT: Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1998 . . . S. 1768. Helms amendment No. 2130.

ACTION: AMENDMENT AGREED TO, 90-10

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1768, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1998, will provide \$3.109 billion in mandatory and discretionary budget authority, including \$1.992 billion in emergency funding for the Department of Defense, \$561.9 million to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies, and \$278.0 million in other discretionary supplemental appropriations. A total of \$273.9 million in rescissions and other offsets will also be enacted.

The Helms amendment would express the sense of the Senate that the United Nations should publicly acknowledge the financial and military support of the United States in maintaining international peace and stability and that the United Nations should immediately reduce the percentage that the United States is assessed for United Nations peacekeeping operations to 25 percent, which is the maximum permitted under United States law. The amendment would also note that the United States should introduce a resolution in the United Nations Security Council that would require the Council to report to all member nations on the amount that the United States has spent since January 1, 1990 on United Nations Security Council resolutions, as determined by the Defense Department, and that the United States should send demarches to Council members informing them of the same. Finally, the amendment would require the President to report to Congress within 45 days of enactment of this Act of actions taken with regard to this amendment. The amendment would also make 10 findings. Those findings: list the billions of dollars that the United States spends on United Nations missions that the United Nations refuses to include as part of the United States' contribution; note that the United Nations continues to charge the United States 30.4 percent of the costs of each of its peacekeeping operations, even though United States law limits that percentage to 25 percent; and note the size of the national debt, the fact that the President wants "emergency" funds of approximately \$1.8 billion to support current United Nations operations, and the fact that the President wants Congress to approve more than \$1 billion in "arrearages" (past due assessments) to the United Nations.

(See other side)

YEAS (90)				NAYS (10)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republican (55 or 100%)		Democrats (35 or 78%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (10 or 22%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Akaka	Hollings		Bingaman		
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Inouye		Dodd		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Biden	Johnson		Feinstein		
Bennett	Jeffords	Boxer	Kerrey		Kennedy		
Bond	Kempthorne	Breaux	Kohl		Kerry		
Brownback	Kyl	Bryan	Landrieu		Lautenberg		
Burns	Lott	Bumpers	Levin		Leahy		
Campbell	Lugar	Byrd	Lieberman		Rockefeller		
Chafee	Mack	Cleland	Mikulski		Sarbanes		
Coats	McCain	Conrad	Moseley-Braun		Wellstone		
Cochran	McConnell	Daschle	Moynihan				
Collins	Murkowski	Dorgan	Murray				
Coverdell	Nickles	Durbin	Reed				
Craig	Roberts	Feingold	Reid				
D'Amato	Roth	Ford	Robb				
DeWine	Santorum	Glenn	Torricelli				
Domenici	Sessions	Graham	Wyden				
Enzi	Shelby	Harkin					
Faircloth	Smith, Bob						
Frist	Smith, Gordon						
Gorton	Snowe						
Gramm	Specter						
Grams	Stevens						
Grassley	Thomas						
Gregg	Thompson						
Hagel	Thurmond						
Hatch	Warner						
Helms							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The United Nations exists today solely because of the United States' generous support over the past several decades, yet it has frequently served as little more than a podium for despots from oppressed nations to puff themselves up by ranting against the United States. Frequently, the United States, sometimes with a handful of stalwart allies and sometimes alone, has had to stand in defense of liberty against tyrants and their leftist quisling apologists at the United Nations. Due in large part to the courage of President Ronald Reagan, the forces of liberty have surged around the globe. However, anti-American rhetoric has yet to go out of fashion with the crybaby bureaucrats at the United Nations. They are continually whining that the United States is not paying its fair share to them.

What exactly is the United States fair share? It pays 25 percent. Red China, in contrast, which has a \$50 billion trade surplus with the United States, pays less than 1 percent. It regularly uses its United Nations membership to undermine the United States' interests, and for that matter, the interests of humanity. India, which voted against the United States 76 percent of the time last year, will pay less than three-tenths of 1 percent, and it will also get \$143 million in foreign aid from the United States. In addition to the 25-percent bill the United States is given for United Nations operations, it gets a separate bill for peacekeeping operations; that bill is 30.5 percent. Making matters worse, the United Nations refuses to recognize United States contributions that are made to such operations independently of its assessments. According to the Defense Department, the United States spent just under \$3 billion last year on United Nations operations in addition to the \$334 million that it officially paid.

What does the United Nations say? It says that the United States owes it money, because it has only paid it 25 percent of its costs instead of 30.5 percent. It calls this difference "arrearages." The United States has only paid 25 percent because since April 30, 1994, it has by law been restricted to that percentage. Unfortunately, some Democrats are constantly trying to make Congress pay those arrearages, because they say failing to do so hurts the United States' influence in the world. The Secretary of State even went so far as to say that not paying the arrearages would result in a "shutdown of the United States' foreign policy." It strikes us as rather feckless to suggest that the United States has subcontracted its foreign policy to the United Nations; the Secretary of State, as the representative of the most powerful and most generous country on earth, should be able to advance America's interests without toadying to ingrates at the United Nations.

If the United States were stupid enough to pay these arrearages, the money would flow into the United Nations and directly back out again to countries that paid more than the minor assessments they were given by the United Nations. For instance, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy all claim they are owed money for their help in past peacekeeping operations--are these countries interested in liberty, or are they mercenaries fighting for a buck? Further, we note that these countries did not bother to help the United States in the recent build-up to make Saddam Hussein back down--we have no doubt that they are pleased that we kept the Middle East calm and their oil cheap, but it sure has not resulted in their dropping their greedy demands for more money from the United States, which secured the peace for them.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, in talking about assessments, recently said: "Fiji has done its part. What about the U.S.?" For 1998, Fiji was assessed \$47,636; the United States was assessed \$297,727,256. The United States does not intend on paying \$297,727,256, though--it intends on paying \$901 million, plus an additional \$210 million for peacekeeping. Nevertheless, the Secretary General's comment is typical. United Nations officials continually assert that the United States is not paying enough in an effort to squeeze even more money out of the American taxpayers. It is time that we stopped this dishonest practice. The Helms amendment would pressure the United Nations into admitting how generous Americans are and always have been. We urge the adoption of this amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

The Helms amendment would undercut the effectiveness of the United Nations and the United States' leadership in that organization. The United States is already losing influence in the United Nations due to conservative Republican Members' obstinate refusal to pay arrearages that the United States owes. If it now demands a tally of its independent contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations and a cut in its assessments, it will lose further standing. The United Nations will lose funding and thus effectiveness. This amendment is ill-advised and should be rejected.